

Luke 14:33. What does it mean to consecrate all that we have?

What scriptures teach the support of the ministry? Matt. 10:9, 10; I Cor. 8:9-14.

Where is the giving of the tenth approved in the New Testament? Matt. 23:23.

How much ought we give outright to the Lord's work? I Cor. 16:2.

If we lack in this grace how may we obtain it? (Pray, James 1:5, and practice II Cor. 9:13)

Does the Brethren church have the grace of giving as it ought? Why not? How may we increase it?

What can our young people do to encourage the spirit of giving?

### DARK DAYS AND THEIR LESSONS

Ps. 107:1-15

Topic for Oct. 13.

The night side of life is just as real as the bright side. Dark days will come in spite of all that we can do. Human knowledge and human power is limited and when sorrow comes that we cannot stay the only thing left is to take that point of view which will enable us to bear the trial and even get blessing from it. This the Christian will do.

The Bible does not explain all the mysteries of God's will in human suffering but it does teach us how to do our part in bearing affliction. If we follow it we shall find a sun in every sky and a silver lining to every cloud and be able to be clothed with the garments of praise rather than the spirit of heaviness even on the dark days of life.

#### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These will be given each week. They afford good passages to read in family worship or private daily Bible study. They are not to be read in the public meeting as the passages are too long.

Mon., Oct. 7, Suffering with Christ, I Pet. 4:12-19.  
Tues., Oct. 8, The silver lining, Heb. 12:5-11.  
Wed., Oct. 9, Working eternal glory, II Cor. 4:13-18.  
Thurs., Oct. 10, Sorrow and helpfulness, II Cor. 1:1-7.  
Fri., Oct. 11, For the spirit of heaviness, Ps. 30:1-12.  
Sat., Oct. 12, Joy beyond the cross, Heb. 12:1-3.  
Sun., Oct. 13, The topic.

#### SCRIPTURE HELP

1. Ps. 119:67. Affliction may be used of God to bring us to repentance and keep us faithful.

2. Heb. 12:6. Dark days have their part in our teaching just as punishment as well as praise is necessary in training a child.

3. Matt. 5:12. The persecutions we endure in order to do right all bring their reward not only now but in the eternal treasures of character.

4. II Cor. 4:17. This reward is infinitely greater than the reward of unrighteousness which this world offers.

5. Rom. 8:18. In fact the sufferings of the present are not worthy to be compared with the glory of the virtues of character which result if we bear our sufferings in the right spirit.

6. Rom. 5:3. Each trial prepares the way for strength to bear greater things. Each deepening shadow brings out the stars with greater brightness.

7. Ps. 126:6. Let us then accept our sorrows not as the end of life but as preparation for the end—as the seed time of sacrifice which is so essential to the glad time of harvest.

8. I Pet. 4:13. In our dark days let us remember the gloom that darkened the world as our elder Brother hung upon the cross. Out from that gloom we hear His own sweet voice, "Fear not. It is I. Be not afraid. My peace I leave with you."

9. II Cor. 1:4. Dark days prepare us to help others who also experience dark days. No one can fully sympathize with another who has not experienced similar sorrow.

10. John 12:32. Jesus gave us the example of sacrifice and patient suffering for the sake of others.

#### QUESTIONS

1. Will dark days ever cease? Rev. 21:25.
2. Does God want us to long to escape from this

world into the bright day of the next or does he want us to help turn the night of this world into day?

3. How can we help "scatter smiles and sunshine everywhere we go?"

4. What are some lessons of dark days commonly overlooked?

5. How do we sometimes bring dark days on ourselves?

6. Which ought to concern us most, sin or the consequences of sin?

7. Does God sympathize with us in all our affliction? Isa. 63:9.

#### FOR MEDITATION

God is our Shepherd even in the valley of the shadow of death. The promise of Matt. 28:20 literally translated from the Greek is most blessed. "Lo I am with you all the days even until the end of the age." The promise is in the present tense and includes the dark days as well as the bright ones.

"The cross is not greater than his grace  
The clouds cannot hide his blessed face  
I am satisfied to know  
That with Jesus here below  
I can conquer every foe."

May we not learn to say with our beloved martyred president in the hour of his death,

"Nearer my God to thee, nearer to thee  
E'en tho it be a cross that raiseth me."

C. F. YODER.

## The Sunday School

### JOSEPH IN PRISON—Genesis 39:20-40:8

*Golden Text.*—But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy.—Gen. 39:21.

*Lesson Thought.*—The secret of Joseph's success under the most trying circumstances was God's presence.

*Introduction.*—In our last lesson we left Joseph with the Midianites who had bought him from his brothers. He was taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, a captain of Pharaoh's bodyguard. His faithfulness soon brought him into favor with his master, and it was not long until his house was given into his care. Not only was Joseph blest in his faithfulness, but his master's house and all that he had enjoyed the blessing of God for Joseph's sake. Then came an awful temptation, and one which he resisted and overcame. He was falsely accused by his temptress, and his master's anger was stirred against him, and as a result he was put into prison. Here is where we find Joseph in our lesson today.

#### Meaning and Application of the Text

20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

To understand the lesson intelligently it will be necessary to go back and begin with the first verse of chapter 39 and read up to the beginning of today's lesson. Here you will find why Joseph was cast into prison. It was not for any wrong that he had done, but because he was true to God and true to himself. One of the lessons we learn from the life of Joseph is that he had the happy faculty of living sweetly no matter where he was. He was not dependent upon the conditions in which he found himself. He had the fine art of getting the very best out of any circumstances. To do this we must be right with God as Joseph was. The man who is right with God will be faithful anywhere and at all times. This was the secret of Joseph's success thru all the trying experiences in Egypt. Whether in prison or in the king's palace, he was always the same. Can as much be said of us?

21 But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

Here are three things the Lord did for Joseph: (1) In the first place the Lord was with him and that means a great deal. He was with him, not

only in the sense that he is with everybody, but he was with him to bless him and care for him.

(2) The Lord showed him mercy. He shows mercy to all but he was specially merciful to Joseph. And why? Because he was deserving. (3) He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. Some one who was reading the story of Joseph said, "What a lucky fellow he must have been." There was not any luck about it; it was faithfulness, obedience on the part of Joseph that won for him the favor of God and man. Even others were blest for Joseph's sake. Let no young man imagine that it was luck that promoted Joseph. Not luck, but faithfulness.

22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it.

Some of these men may have been people of high rank, not criminals but political offenders such as the chief butler and cupbearer. This was a new experience for Joseph, prison life, but it did not break his spirit; he was in training for a great work for God, and bears up nobly under it. There were qualities in Joseph which fitted him for ruling no matter where he was. It sometimes requires just such experiences as Joseph had to show what is in men, and whether they are fitted for promotion. His experience in Potiphar's house and in prison were a part of his necessary education.

23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the Lord was with him, and that which he did, the Lord made it to prosper.

So faithful was Joseph that the keeper of the prison did not need to look after anything that he had committed into the hands of Joseph. Such faithfulness always leads to promotion. Again and again it is said that the Lord was with Joseph and prospered all that he did. But Joseph was not a mere tool in the hands of God; his was not a passive goodness. He had learned the lesson of diligence. Many people in the same place would have lost all interest in life. They would have said fate is against them, there is no use trying to do anything. If a man is put into prison because he is faithful, what use is there in trying to live right. But that was not Joseph. He attended to his duties just as promptly, as punctually, and as faithfully as if he had been serving in his own father's house. If we would succeed in life these two lessons we must learn, diligence and faithfulness.

1 And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

2 And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

3 And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.

4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph

What business has this bit of court scandal in the Bible? Probably it would never have found a place here were it not for the fact that putting these two officers into prison had a very important bearing upon the story of Joseph's life. Joseph was brought into contact with two of the king's officers which seems to have been a very important part of training and education. Whether or not we make use of such opportunities depends entirely upon our character, our relation to God. Every discipline of life is a stepping stone to something higher if we are willing to accept the experiences of life as from God. Prison life can be turned into an advantage and from it very rich experiences may be had. At first it looked like a great misfortune that Joseph should be cast into prison, yet it is doubtful whether without that experience he should ever have been brought in touch with the king of Egypt. The lesson for each one of us is that we make haste to use all the opportunities that come to us in life whatever our condition may be.

with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

5 And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to